

Adoption of ChatGPT in Academic Writing: College Students' Perspectives, Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions as Basis for an AI Literacy Program

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perspectives, attitudes, and behavioral intentions of college students toward the use of ChatGPT in academic writing. Anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study employed a mixed-methods descriptive–correlational design using survey questionnaires and focus group discussions. The study was conducted among 152 college students at IQRA Development Academy Inc.

Results showed high perceived usefulness ($M = 4.50$), particularly in idea generation, writing improvement, and task efficiency. Perceived ease of use was also high ($M = 4.38$), indicating that ChatGPT is accessible, although effective use requires skill in prompt construction. Students demonstrated positive attitudes ($M = 4.32$) and favorable behavioral intentions ($M = 4.25$) toward using ChatGPT in academic writing. Spearman's rho revealed significant moderate positive relationships between behavioral intention and perceived usefulness ($\rho = .511, p < .05$) and perceived ease of use ($\rho = .489, p < .05$).

Qualitative findings supported the quantitative results. Students reported benefits such as improved grammar, clearer organization of ideas, increased confidence, and time efficiency. However, concerns were raised regarding plagiarism, overreliance, and the accuracy of AI-generated content. Participants emphasized the need for institutional guidance, training, and clear policies.

The study concludes that students are receptive to using ChatGPT as a support tool in academic writing when guided by ethical standards. Based on these findings, an AI literacy program was developed to promote responsible and effective use of AI in academic writing.

Keywords: Academic writing, AI literacy, ChatGPT, ethical use, technology acceptance

INTRODUCTION

The increasing integration of artificial intelligence tools in higher education has reshaped how college students approach academic writing. Among these tools, ChatGPT has gained attention for supporting idea generation, grammar correction, paraphrasing, and summarization, making it useful for writing-intensive tasks (Mahapatra, 2024; OpenAI, 2023). As a result, academic writing practices continue to evolve, raising concerns related to learning quality, ethical use, and instructional responsibility. Recent studies indicate that students rely on ChatGPT not only as a supplementary aid but, in some cases, as a primary resource for completing writing tasks (Al-Harashsheh et al., 2025; Abdallah Abu Quba et al., 2025).

Academic writing remains a persistent challenge in English Language Teaching. Students often experience difficulties in organizing ideas, using appropriate academic vocabulary, developing arguments, and applying correct grammar. These challenges lead students to seek external support tools, including AI-based applications. While ChatGPT provides immediate assistance in language and structure, uncritical use may mask underlying writing weaknesses and reduce writing autonomy and critical engagement (Stoyanova et al., 2025).

In the Philippine context, the use of ChatGPT continues to increase across higher education institutions, influencing both teaching practices and student learning experiences (Villarino, 2025). Many students use the tool without formal guidance or clear institutional policies. This situation increases risks related to plagiarism, misinformation, and overdependence on AI-generated content (Catherine et al., 2024; Stracqualursi & Agati, 2024; Dararat Khampusaen, 2025). These concerns are more evident in provincial and rural settings, where differences in digital literacy, access, and institutional support affect how students engage with AI tools (Villarino, 2025).

AI literacy, defined as the ethical, critical, and effective use of AI tools, has become essential in higher education. Structured AI literacy programs support academic integrity, responsible technology use, and independent writing development (Mumtaz et al., 2024; Cheng, 2024). In English Language Teaching, where academic writing is central, the absence of such programs weakens efforts to sustain critical thinking and learner autonomy, especially when AI tools are used without pedagogical direction (Stoyanova et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of research on artificial intelligence in education, empirical evidence on student-level adoption of ChatGPT in academic writing remains limited, particularly in provincial Philippine higher education contexts (Villarino, 2025; Cheng, 2024). This gap is significant because contextual factors influence how students adopt and use AI tools in academic tasks (Catherine et al., 2024).

This study examined the perspectives, attitudes, and behavioral intentions of college students toward ChatGPT in academic writing at IQRA Development Academy Inc., located in Lanao del Sur, Philippines. By analyzing students' perceptions and experiences, the study identified both the benefits and risks associated with AI-assisted writing. The findings served as the basis for developing an AI literacy program aimed at promoting ethical use, strengthening academic integrity, and supporting independent writing skills.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods descriptive–correlational design with concurrent triangulation to examine college students' perspectives, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward the use of ChatGPT in academic writing. Quantitative data were collected through survey questionnaires based on the Technology Acceptance Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior, while qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions.

Participants and Sampling

The study was conducted at IQRA Development Academy Inc., Lanao del Sur, Philippines. A total of 152 college students were selected from a population of 202 using purposive sampling. Participants were chosen based on their engagement in academic writing tasks and prior familiarity with ChatGPT.

Instrument and Validation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. The instrument was adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and utilized a Likert scale. Content validity was established through expert review. Reliability testing indicated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$), exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Confirmatory Factor Analysis supported construct validity, indicating acceptable model fit.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, particularly mean, were used to determine the level of each variable. Spearman's rho was applied to examine relationships between behavioral intentions and predictor variables. Qualitative data from

focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis through inductive coding and theme development.

RESULTS

Students reported high levels of perceived usefulness ($M = 4.50$) and perceived ease of use ($M = 4.38$) of ChatGPT in academic writing. Attitudes toward ChatGPT were also positive ($M = 4.32$), while behavioral intentions to use the tool remained favorable ($M = 4.25$). These results indicate strong acceptance of ChatGPT across all measured constructs.

Table 1 Students' Perceived Usefulness (PU) of ChatGPT in Academic Writing (n = 152)

Perceived Usefulness (PU)	Percentage (%)						Mean	Qualitative Description
	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA		
¹ I find ChatGPT useful in academic writing.	2.63	2.63	1.32	23.68	55.92	13.82	4.53	Agree
² Using ChatGPT makes it easier for me to generate ideas and content for writing tasks.	0.66	2.63	1.97	21.05	54.61	19.08	4.61	Agree
³ Using ChatGPT improves the quality of my writing.	1.97	1.97	4.61	30.26	50.00	11.18	4.34	Agree
⁴ Using ChatGPT enhances my efficiency in revising and editing my writing.	1.32	1.97	3.29	21.05	51.32	21.05	4.55	Agree
⁵ Using ChatGPT enables me to finish academic writing assignments effectively	2.63	2.63	1.32	23.68	55.92	13.82	4.49	Agree
<i>Overall Mean</i>							4.50	Agree

Among the indicators, the highest-rated item was idea generation ($M = 4.61$), followed by efficiency in revising and editing ($M = 4.55$). The lowest-rated item was improvement of writing quality ($M = 4.34$), although it remained within the "Agree" range. These results indicate that students primarily value ChatGPT for generating content and improving workflow efficiency rather than solely enhancing writing quality.

Table 2 Students' Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of ChatGPT in Academic Writing

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)	Percentage (%)						Mean	Qualitative Description
	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA		
¹ I think ChatGPT is easy to use for writing tasks.	3.29	0.66	4.61	22.37	52.63	16.45	4.45	Agree
² Learning how to use ChatGPT for academic writing task is easy for me.	0.66	1.97	5.26	19.08	55.92	17.11	4.57	Agree

³ I can easily become skilled at using ChatGPT in writing.	1.97	3.29	7.24	36.18	41.45	9.87	4.20	Agree
⁴ My interaction with ChatGPT is understandable.	1.32	1.32	6.58	26.32	49.34	15.13	4.43	Agree
⁵ My interaction with ChatGPT is clear.	0.00	2.63	5.26	28.95	46.05	17.11	4.52	Agree
⁶ It is easy for me to find information for academic writing through ChatGPT	1.97	0.66	4.61	22.37	55.92	14.47	4.53	Agree
⁷ Using ChatGPT for writing does not require a lot of effort.	1.32	4.61	10.53	38.16	37.50	7.89	4.02	Somewhat agree
Overall Mean							4.38	Agree

The highest-rated item was ease of learning how to use ChatGPT (M = 4.57), while the lowest-rated item was the perception that ChatGPT requires little effort (M = 4.02). This suggests that although students find the platform accessible, some degree of effort and skill, particularly in prompt construction, is still required.

Table 3 Students' Attitudes Toward Using ChatGPT in Academic Writing

Attitude towards using ChatGPT in writing	Percentage (%)						Mean	Qualitative Description
	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA		
¹ I like using ChatGPT while writing in English.	2.63	1.32	1.32	29.61	50.00	15.13	4.48	Agree
² I believe that ChatGPT helps me to be more engaged in academic writing.	0.00	3.95	3.29	21.05	56.58	15.13	4.55	Agree
³ I generally favor the use of ChatGPT in academic writing	0.66	3.29	5.26	37.50	44.74	8.55	4.20	Agree
⁴ I believe that it is a good idea to use ChatGPT for writing my English Assignments in the future.	1.97	3.95	9.87	36.18	36.84	11.18	4.17	Agree
⁵ Writing academic assignments using ChatGPT is a good idea	1.97	4.61	6.58	36.84	43.42	6.58	4.19	Agree
⁶ I feel confident and positive about using ChatGPT in my English writing process.	2.63	1.32	3.95	36.18	47.37	8.55	4.35	Agree
Overall Mean							4.32	Agree

The highest-rated item was increased engagement in academic writing (M = 4.55), while the lowest-rated item was the belief that using ChatGPT for assignments is a good idea (M = 4.17). This pattern indicates that students appreciate the tool's benefits but maintain some reservations regarding its use in formal academic tasks.

Table 4 Students' Behavioral Intentions to Use ChatGPT in Academic Writing

Behavioral intention to use ChatGPT in writing	Percentage (%)						Mean	Qualitative Description
	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA		
¹ I intend to use ChatGPT to improve my English writing ability in the future.	1.97	4.61	1.97	23.03	55.26	13.16	4.41	Agree
² I plan to use ChatGPT regularly for my English writing tasks.	1.97	4.61	15.13	30.26	40.79	7.24	4.06	Agree
³ I am willing to incorporate ChatGPT as part of my English writing process.	1.97	2.63	11.18	34.87	42.76	6.58	4.17	Agree
⁴ I expect to use ChatGPT to enhance my English writing skills consistently.	0.66	4.61	3.95	28.95	52.63	9.21	4.37	Agree
<i>Overall Mean</i>							4.25	Agree

The strongest intention was using ChatGPT to improve writing ability (M = 4.41), while the lowest was regular use (M = 4.06). This suggests that students prefer selective and purposeful use rather than constant reliance on the tool.

Table 5 Relationship Between Behavioral Intentions and Perceptions of Usefulness and Ease of Use

Relationship	Correlation coefficient (r_{rho})	p-value	Remark	
Students' Behavioral Intentions to use ChatGPT	Usefulness	.511	.000*	Significant
	Ease of Use	.489	.000*	Significant

Note. r_{rho} =Spearman's rho, *significant at .05 level of significance Correlation strength interpretation based on Cohen (1988) and Field (2013):

0.00–0.29 → Weak correlation

0.30–0.49 → Moderate correlation

0.50–0.69 → Moderate-to-strong correlation

0.70–0.89 → Strong correlation

0.90–1.00 → Very strong correlation

Results revealed a moderate positive relationship between behavioral intentions and perceived usefulness ($\rho = .511, p < .05$), and between behavioral intentions and perceived ease of use ($\rho = .489, p < .05$). This indicates that students are more likely to adopt ChatGPT when they perceive it as useful and easy to use.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative data from the focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses were coded, grouped into categories, and organized into themes aligned with the study variables. Verbatim responses were retained to preserve participant meaning, with English translations provided where necessary.

Theme 1: Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Students described ChatGPT as useful for idea generation, writing improvement, and task efficiency.

Participant P1 stated, *“For me, one of the benefits of using ChatGPT is that it helps me save time, generate ideas, and improve my writing skills.”*

Participant P2 stated, *“It helps me save time, generate ideas, and improve my writing.”*

Students also highlighted its role in organizing ideas”

Participant P3 stated, *“It helped me organize my thoughts and create a clear outline.”*

Participant P8 stated, *“It gives me direction or sample sentences that help me continue writing.”*

ChatGPT also supports comprehension and confidence.

Participant P10 stated, *“Natutulungan akong i-explain kaagad ni ChatGPT.” (ChatGPT helps explain things immediately.)*

Students use ChatGPT as a support tool for organizing ideas, improving language, and completing tasks efficiently.

Theme 2: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

Students described ChatGPT as easy to use due to its simple interface and quick response.

Participant P1 stated, *“It is easy to use with a simple interface.”*

Participant P8 stated, *“You just type your question or instructions, and it gives results right away.”*

However, effective use depends on prompt clarity.

Participant P3 stated, *“The main challenge is making sure my prompts are specific enough to get accurate answers.”*

Participant P10 stated, *“If I am not specific, it changes the entire essay.”*

Internet connectivity also affects usability.

Participant P4 stated, *“Accessing ChatGPT depends on the internet signal. Here in Lanao del Sur, the internet connection is weak.”*

Ease of use improves with experience, but technical and contextual barriers remain.

Theme 3: Attitudes Toward Use (ATT)

Students expressed positive attitudes toward ChatGPT, viewing it as helpful in learning and writing.

Participant P1 stated, *“I feel positive because it helps me learn and improve my knowledge. I use it as a reference and a guide.”*

Participant P8 stated, *“It is helpful and convenient, especially when I need to start or edit my work.”*

At the same time, students expressed concerns about dependency and authenticity.

Participant P1 stated, *“I become unsure or lazy when I depend on ChatGPT.”*

Participant P10 stated, *“It feels unnatural... parang it feels fake to me.” (It feels unnatural. It feels like it is not my own work.)*

Students value ChatGPT but remain cautious about its effect on originality and independent learning.

Theme 4: Behavioral Intentions (BI)

Most Students expressed strong intention to continue using ChatGPT, particularly as a support tool.

Participant P3 stated, *“I will continue using ChatGPT because it makes writing more efficient.”*

Participant P8 stated, *“I will use it responsibly, not to copy everything, but to guide my writing.”*

Students also emphasized controlled use.

Participant P1 stated, *“I will continue using it as a study guide while following academic honesty.”*

Participant P7 stated, *“It is a valuable tool, but do not rely on it too much.”*

Students plan continued use while maintaining awareness of responsible use.

Theme 5: Ethical Concerns (ETH)

Students raised concerns related to plagiarism, dependency, and loss of originality.

Participant P3 stated, *“Copying it without citation can lead to plagiarism.”*

Participant P9 stated, *“Kinokopya lahat... mababasa ng teacher at alam niyang galing sa ChatGPT.” (Some students copy everything. The teacher can tell it came from ChatGPT.)*

Students also expressed concern about reduced creativity.

Participant P5 stated, *“It affects my being as a creative student.”*

Participant P10 stated, *“Nawawala na yung essence... originality from the person.” (The essence of originality is lost.)*

Students show awareness of ethical risks and the need for responsible use.

Theme 6: Institutional Support (INS)

Students emphasized the need for institutional guidance, training, and clear policies.

Participant P1 stated, *“Schools should give proper guidance, training, and awareness on how to use ChatGPT responsibly.”*

Participant P5 stated, *“Institutions must regulate and support. We need clear policies on what is allowed and not allowed.”*

Students opposed banning AI tools.

Participant P1 stated, *“Kahit i-ban, gagawa ng paraan ang student.” (Even if it is banned, students will find ways to use it.)*

Participant P10 stated, *“Not to ban it, but rather help students how to use it properly.”*

Students prefer structured support rather than restriction, highlighting the need for AI literacy programs.

Synthesis of Themes

The qualitative results align with the quantitative findings. Students perceive ChatGPT as useful and easy to use, which supports their positive attitudes and intention to adopt the tool. At the same time, ethical concerns such as plagiarism, dependency, and reduced originality are evident. Students consistently highlight the need for institutional guidance, training, and clear policies. These findings support the integration of AI literacy into academic writing instruction

DISCUSSION

The findings support the Technology Acceptance Model, showing that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influence students' intention to adopt ChatGPT in academic writing. The moderate positive correlations indicate that students are more likely to use the tool when they perceive it as efficient and easy to operate.

The results also align with the Theory of Planned Behavior. Students' positive attitudes toward ChatGPT contribute to their intention to use the tool. This confirms that favorable evaluation of the technology supports behavioral intention, consistent with Ajzen (1991).

Both quantitative and qualitative findings show that students value ChatGPT for idea generation, organization, and language support. Participants reported that the tool improves efficiency and reduces the effort required in writing tasks. This explains the high perceived usefulness scores.

However, the study also reveals a critical tension between utility and dependency. While students recognize the benefits of ChatGPT, they also express concern about overreliance and reduced independent thinking. Statements such as feeling "lazy" or perceiving outputs as "not my own work" indicate an awareness of the potential negative impact on learner autonomy. This reflects broader concerns in the literature regarding the risk of diminishing critical thinking skills when AI tools are used without regulation (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; Dergaa et al., 2023).

Ethical concerns emerged as a central theme. Students demonstrated a strong awareness of plagiarism risks and the importance of maintaining originality. The tendency of some users to copy AI-generated content without modification highlights the need for clear academic policies and ethical standards. This finding is significant, as it shows that students are not only users of the technology but also critical evaluators of its implications.

Another important finding is the contextual influence of infrastructure and digital literacy. While ChatGPT is generally perceived as easy to use, limitations such as unstable internet connectivity and difficulty in constructing effective prompts affect user experience. This highlights that technology adoption is not solely dependent on the tool itself, but also on external conditions and user competence.

The findings also reveal a gap between student usage and institutional support. Students expressed a clear need for structured guidance, training, and policy direction. Rather than banning AI tools, participants strongly favored institutional support through awareness programs and ethical guidelines. This aligns with current educational perspectives that emphasize integration over restriction. In response to these findings, the development of an AI Literacy Program is both timely and necessary. The program directly addresses the identified gaps by promoting ethical awareness, critical evaluation of AI outputs, and responsible integration of ChatGPT into academic writing. It positions ChatGPT as a support tool rather than a replacement for student effort, thereby preserving academic integrity while enhancing learning outcomes.

Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of AI adoption in higher education by providing empirical evidence from a provincial context. It highlights that while students are ready to adopt AI tools, effective integration depends on guidance, policy support, and the development of AI literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

This study examined college students' perspectives, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward the use of ChatGPT in academic writing. Results show that students perceive ChatGPT as useful and easy to use, which supports positive attitudes and intention to adopt the tool. These findings confirm the core assumptions of the Technology Acceptance Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior.

At the same time, students recognize risks related to overreliance, plagiarism, and reduced originality. Qualitative results show that while ChatGPT supports idea generation, organization, and language improvement, its unregulated use may weaken independent thinking and writing development.

The findings highlight a gap between student use of ChatGPT and institutional support. Students actively use the tool, but clear policies, training, and ethical guidelines remain limited.

An AI Literacy Program was developed to address this gap. The program focuses on ethical use, critical evaluation of AI-generated content, and responsible integration into academic writing. This supports academic integrity while maintaining the role of the student as the primary author.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Integrate AI literacy into academic writing courses

Embed structured instruction on ethical use, prompt design, and critical evaluation of AI-generated content.

2. Develop and implement institutional policies on AI use

Establish clear guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable uses of ChatGPT in academic tasks to protect academic integrity.

3. Provide student training on responsible AI use

Conduct workshops and learning modules that guide students in using ChatGPT as a support tool rather than a substitute for their work.

4. Strengthen faculty development on AI integration

Train instructors to design AI-informed tasks, detect misuse, and guide students in ethical and effective use.

5. Improve digital infrastructure and access

Address issues related to internet connectivity and access to ensure equitable use of AI tools across learning contexts.

6. Conduct further research across diverse contexts

Expand studies to other institutions, disciplines, and regions validate findings and examine long-term effects of AI use on academic writing.

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